

Guy B. Park Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2015-2024




John D. Warren
Wildlife Division Chief

Wildlife Division Chief

10/29/15

Date

Guy B. Park Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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Jake Allman, Fisheries Management Biologist

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KANSAS CITY REGION

KC RCT


Signature

10-23-2015
Date

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Wildlife Management Chief


Signature

10/28/15
Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Guy B. Park Conservation Area, # 9428
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1994
- **Acreage:** 380 acres
- **County:** Platte
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**
Manage for wildlife and aquatic resources while providing compatible public recreational opportunities.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**
The desired future condition of Guy B. Park is healthy woodland, aquatic, grassland, and old field communities that include a diversity of habitat complexes.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**
N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** None
 - B. Natural Areas:** None
- II. Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** None observed.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None
- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - 4 parking lots (1 American with Disabilities Act [ADA] accessible)
 - 1 boat ramp (ADA accessible)
 - 1 fishing dock (ADA accessible)
 - 1 privy (ADA accessible)
 - 1 18-acre fishing lake – Tobacco Hills Lake
 - 1 1-acre fishing pond

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** There is a 100-footwide easement with Northwest Electric Power Cooperative.
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None observed.
- F. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- G. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Invasive plants continue to be a threat. Invasive sericea lespedeza, Johnson grass, tall fescue and musk thistle are well established. Small populations of shrub honeysuckle, Japanese honeysuckle, garlic mustard, autumn olive and teasel have been located on or very close to the area.
- 2) Prior to the Department's purchase of the area, the forested areas were poorly managed. Previous grazing and harvesting methods were detrimental to the area's trees and understory plant diversity. Subsequently, there are opportunities for the Department to maintain and enhance the forest health and wildlife habitat through sustainable forest management practices.
- 3) The fertile soils allow natural succession and invasive plants to advance at an increasing rate. Cropping in these open lands is needed to help set back succession and impede the spread of invasive plant species. Cropping also provides food and brood rearing areas for wildlife, as fields are rotated and left idle. Many of these fields also present opportunities for dove management.
- 4) Early successional fields provide food and cover for various wildlife species, including bobwhite quail, white-tail deer, turkey, rabbits and song birds. The conservation area has many open fields that were planted with native grasses and forbs and converted to other early successional vegetation types. The forbs disappeared from the open fields with time, making them less desirable for wildlife. The fields require management to increase plant diversity and promote forb growth. Managers can maximize quality habitat by managing for a mix of

shrubs, forbs and grasses. Management of these early successional fields provides brood-rearing areas for ground nesting birds, increased forage for white-tail deer, and habitat for rabbits and other non-game species.

Management Objective 1: Manage forested areas to improve overall natural community health while improving habitat for wildlife.

Strategy 1: Inventory forests during FY16 to develop prescriptions for ecological and silvicultural treatment.

Strategy 2: Evaluate and perform timber stand improvement as needed.

Strategy 3: Control/suppress invasive species.

Management Objective 2: Provide food and cover for wildlife, and maintain early successional vegetation for a variety of wildlife species.

Strategy 1: Use permittee farmers in conjunction with Department staff to plant crops/food plots annually. Crop rotation will be used for soil health and a portion of these acres will lie fallow each year to increase early successional habitat for wildlife. Ensure farming practices are conducted in accordance with the Soil and Water Conservation Plan for the area.

Strategy 2: Manage early successional old fields and existing stands of planted native grasses and forbs to maintain diverse vegetative habitats. Rotate management units to provide adequate habitat during management activities.

Strategy 3: Control/suppress invasive species.

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations:

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Riparian corridors have been widened along the streams. Opportunities exist to improve the quality of the corridors and their plant diversity.
- 2) Tobacco Hills Lake is the main aquatic feature in the area. The lake receives high public use because of its proximity to a large urban population and its ease of accessibility. As a result, it is important that the Department maintains a high quality fishery in the lake.
- 3) The conservation area contains one fishable pond that sits above the north arm of Tobacco Hills Lake.

Management Objective 1: Protect and enhance stream corridors to improve water quality, promote stable stream banks, provide flood abatement and increase habitat diversity.

Strategy 1: Fisheries staff will evaluate buffer widths and conditions, providing recommendations to the Area Manager. Additional evaluations should be repeated every five years to account for changes in land management and area boundaries.

Strategy 2: Maintain and/or establish minimum 100-foot vegetated buffers (pursuant to Department guidelines) on both sides of permanent and intermittent streams by 2016 (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). A diversity of suitable trees and shrub species will be used if buffers need to be enhanced.

Herbaceous vegetation is suitable for buffers along streams with channels that are not deeply incised.

Management Objective 2: Manage Tobacco Hills Lake to promote a high quality fishery.

Strategy 1: Maintain aquatic vegetation at beneficial levels.

Strategy 2: Maintain the lake's trophy bluegill population.

Strategy 3: Carefully consider the timing of controlled burns in the watershed to limit exposing bare soil, and subsequently minimize sedimentation and excessive nutrient runoff.

Strategy 4: Replenish/increase fish attractors, as needed, to increase angler success on undesirable crappie.

Management Objective 3: Manage pond to promote additional angling opportunities.

Strategy 1: Manage aquatic vegetation to allow reasonable shore angling by using targeted aquatic herbicide applications. Promote beneficial aquatic plants, where appropriate and when possible, through seeding and transplants.

Strategy 2: Maintain pond dam devoid of trees and shrubs to minimize potential for leaking and associated negative impacts to fish habitat

Strategy 3: Control muskrat and beaver where burrowing creates a significant threat to the integrity of the dam or safety hazards for mowers.

Strategy 4: Utilize additional fish stocking as necessary to maintain a healthy population.

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) A diversity of habitats and wildlife species provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing near a major metropolitan area.
- 2) Opportunities exist for school and civic groups to use the area for fishing, hunting and camping through special use permitting.

- 3) Opportunities exist to build relationships with neighboring land owners.

Management Objective 1: Maintain a diversity of terrestrial and aquatic habitats to provide public users with quality hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Implement annual management activities targeting improvement of terrestrial wildlife populations. Terrestrial and wetland management activities should provide opportunities for hunting and viewing of a variety of species, including deer, turkey, doves, waterfowl, and small game species such as squirrel, rabbit and quail. Periodic review of area regulations should also be incorporated into area management.

Strategy 2: Manage the area's aquatic resources to provide access and opportunity to quality fishing experiences. Maintain public access to Tobacco Hills Lake and the area pond. Periodic review for the suitability of stocking should be conducted to provide additional fishing opportunities as resources allow.

Strategy 3: Maintain adequate access to area habitats through the existing network of parking lots and service roads.

Strategy 4: Allow trapping on the area, as appropriate, through special use permits.

Management Objective 2: Promote the use of the area by school and civic groups through special use permits.

Strategy 1: Allow group use requests that do not interfere with area management priorities in accordance with special use permitting guidelines.

Strategy 2: Promote educational opportunities and school field trips as area resources and staffing allows.

Management Objective 3: Promote a positive working relationship with neighboring land owners.

Strategy 1: Respond to neighbors with requests for shared fencing, boundary issues or trespass problems.

Strategy 2: Respond to neighboring landowners with interest in habitat management on their private property.

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.
- 2) Prioritize acquisition of adjoining land because of the close proximity to a large urban area and the area's small acreage.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Department guidelines and at currently identified maintenance level.

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, should be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Guy B. Park Conservation Area received its name from Missouri's 38th governor, Guy Brasfield Park. Governor Park was born June 10, 1872, in Platte City. He was educated in the public schools and studied at Gaylord Institute in Platte City. In 1896, he graduated from the Law Department of the University of Missouri and later began practicing law in Platte City. He served as city attorney, prosecuting attorney, and as a district delegate to the State Constitutional Convention. He accepted the position of Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit in 1922. He was later elected as Governor of the State and served from 1933 until 1937. Upon expiration of his term as governor, he returned to Platte City and continued his law practice. Governor Guy B. Park died Oct. 1, 1946.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Woodland	105	28
Cropland	91	24
Grassland	68	18
Old Field	66	17
Scrub/Shrub	30	8
Water	20	5
Total	380	100

Public Input Summary:

The draft Guy B. Park Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period May 1–31, 2015. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from 4 respondents (Appendix A). The Guy B. Park Conservation Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they were incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through Guy B. Park Conservation Area public comment period

Supports continuing management of fisheries. Concern that fishing is declining.

Fisheries staff strives to manage the lake as a high quality bluegill fishery. This is achieved by keeping higher numbers of small bass and not stocking channel catfish to avoid inadvertently introducing gizzard shad, which can adversely affect bluegill populations. Routine sampling shows the fish populations at the lake is as good or better than it was the day the lake opened. The only species that has declined is channel catfish, and that is a management decision.

Appreciates this fishing area for people with mobility disabilities. Suggests additional roads and parking areas around the lake to relieve fishing pressure near fishing dock.

The current amenities on the lake provide great opportunities for all the area users. The fishing dock does receive most of the fishing pressure. However, staff has planted beneficial aquatic plants and placed brush piles around the dock, and also between the boat ramp and the dock, to hold as many fish in the area as possible. Unfortunately, the lake shore is very steep-sided and difficult to use for shoreline fishing. Placing a road across the dam could be detrimental to the integrity of the dam over time. Although the area planning team sees the benefit of adding additional amenities around the lake, they feel that it is not feasible and needed at this time.

Suggests mowing around lakes.

Area staff does keep a mowed trail from the parking lot on Bee Creek Boulevard down to and along the dam of the lake for access. The dam, along with the maintained parking area, and boat ramp comprises approximately 16 percent of the shoreline. Approximately 79 percent of the lake is surrounded by trees or steep banks, which makes those areas difficult or unsafe to access with equipment. Due to access and the terrain, the area planning team doesn't feel that mowing can be expanded to the other 5 percent of the shoreline at this time.

Appreciates well patrolled area.

Conservation Agents patrol Guy B. Park to maintain a family friendly fishing area. Cooperation with anglers and other area users has helped keep Guy B. Park an area with few problems and many return visits to the area.

Suggests adding trash cans near lake.

Trash is always a concern for our conservation areas. However, it has been our experience that adding trash cans invites more problems than it solves. The trash cans tend to get quickly filled with household trash, or other trash that has been generated off the area. The area manager would consider allowing a fishing club to handle the trash, if there were a group willing to take on the responsibility. At this time, the area planning team feels the Carry In, Carry Out trash policy is the best approach.

Suggests ADA paved trail around lake shore.

The planning committee does not support this suggestion at this time. The hills surrounding the lake are steep-sided and heavily forested. The construction and movement of earth for accessibility would also undoubtedly negatively impact the quality of the water in the lake and in turn the quality of the fishery would suffer. In addition, there is an extensive trail system open to the public in Platte County. A paved trail exists approximately 1 mile south of the area at the nearby Platte Ridge Park. There are currently another 14 miles of paved trails in the Platte County Trails system. By the year 2030, the trail system expects to have completed nearly 47 miles of interconnected paved trails throughout the county.

Suggests improved parking for trucks with boat trailers.

The planning committee does not support this suggestion at this time. The small size of the lake serves to limit the number of boats that can use the area at any given time. The steep, forested hills surrounding the lake also serve to limit the available space for parking areas. The committee feels that the current infrastructure meets the needs of area users for the duration of this planning period. The planning committee suggests that boaters use the roadway on top of the hill above the boat ramp as additional truck/trailer parking space when space near the boat ramp is in use.

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

- Figure 1: Area Map
- Figure 2: Aerial Easement Map
- Figure 3: Topographic Map
- Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map

Additional Appendices:

- Appendix A: Guy B. Park Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

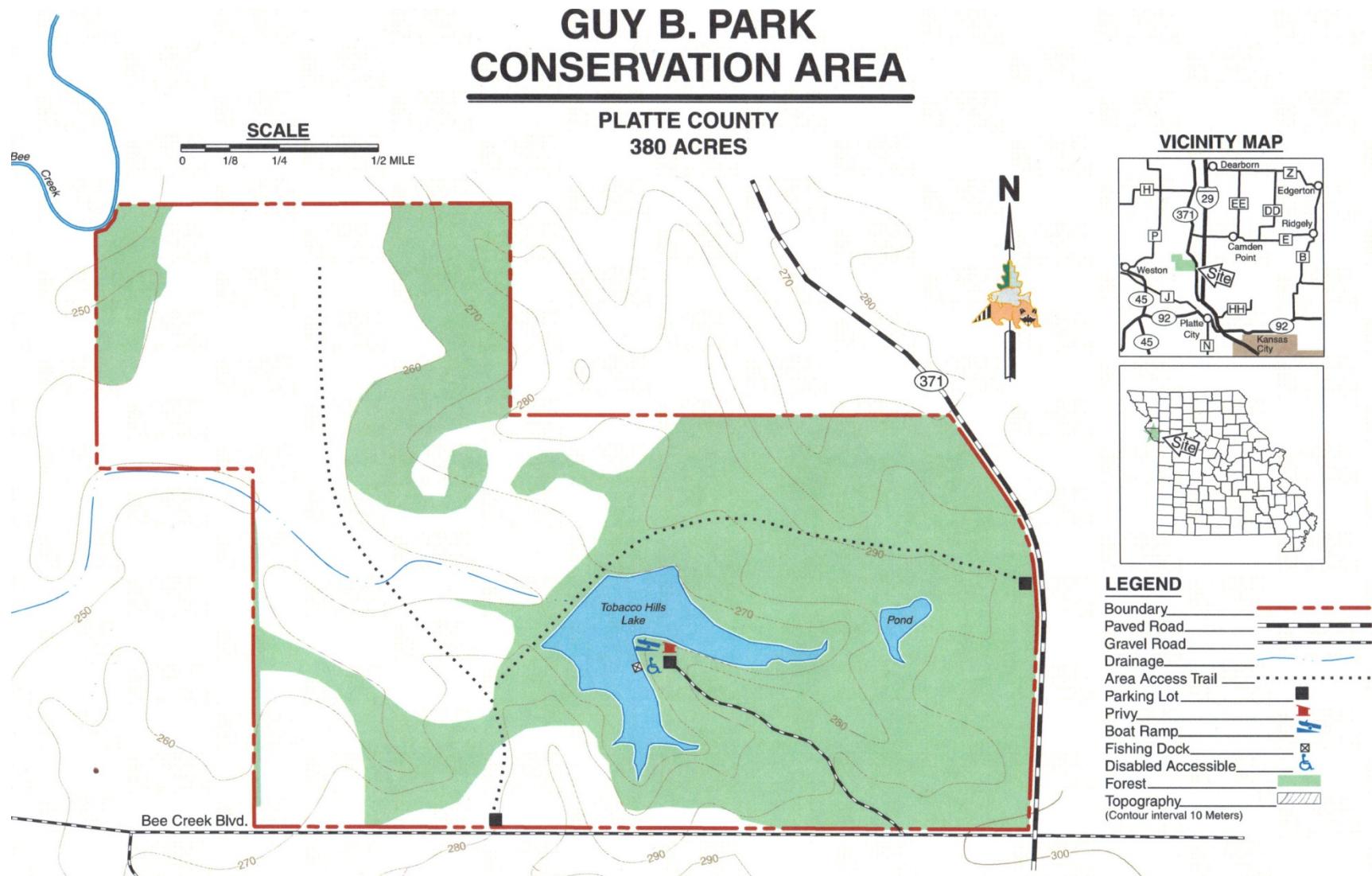


Figure 2: Aerial and Easement Map

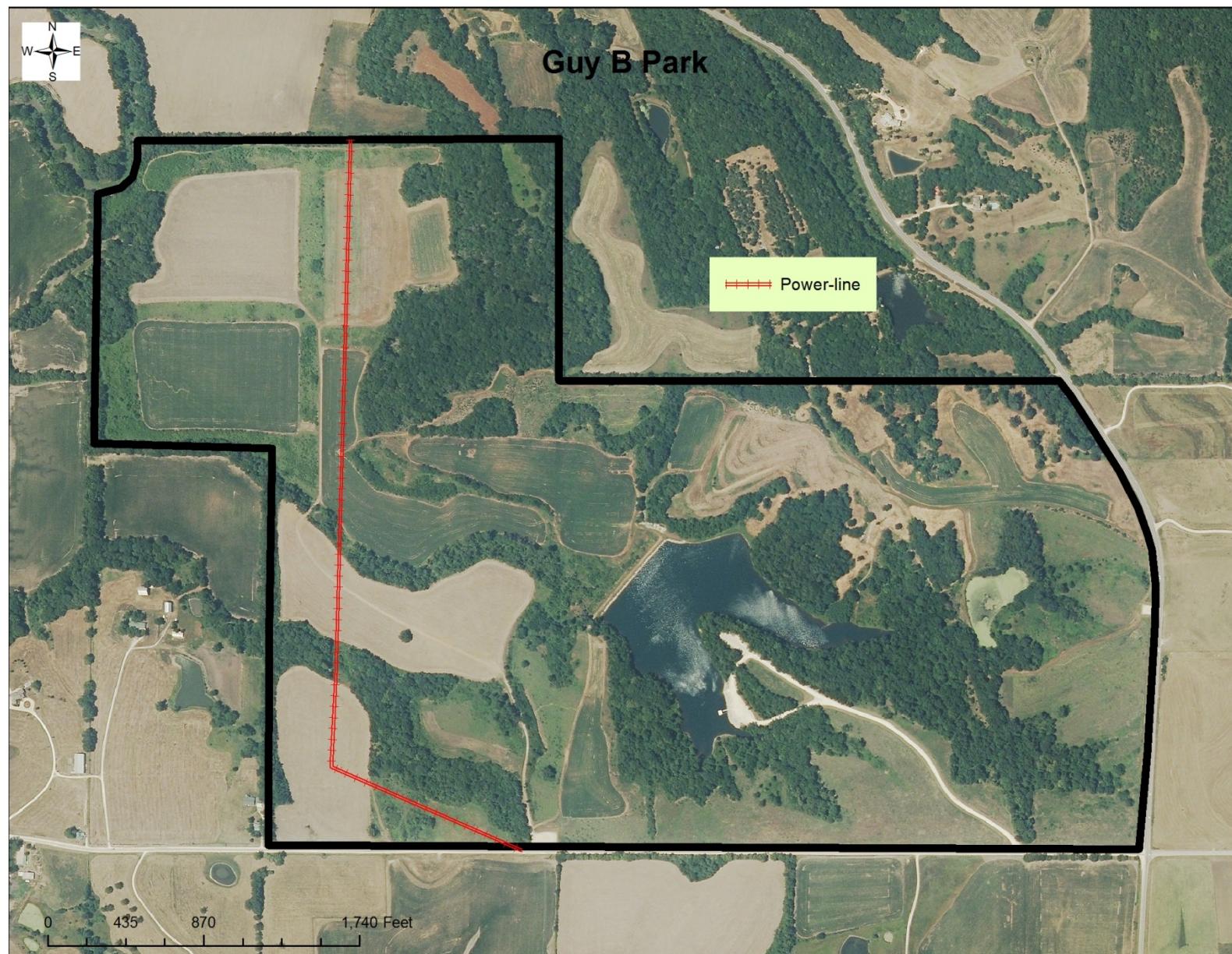


Figure 3: Topographic Map

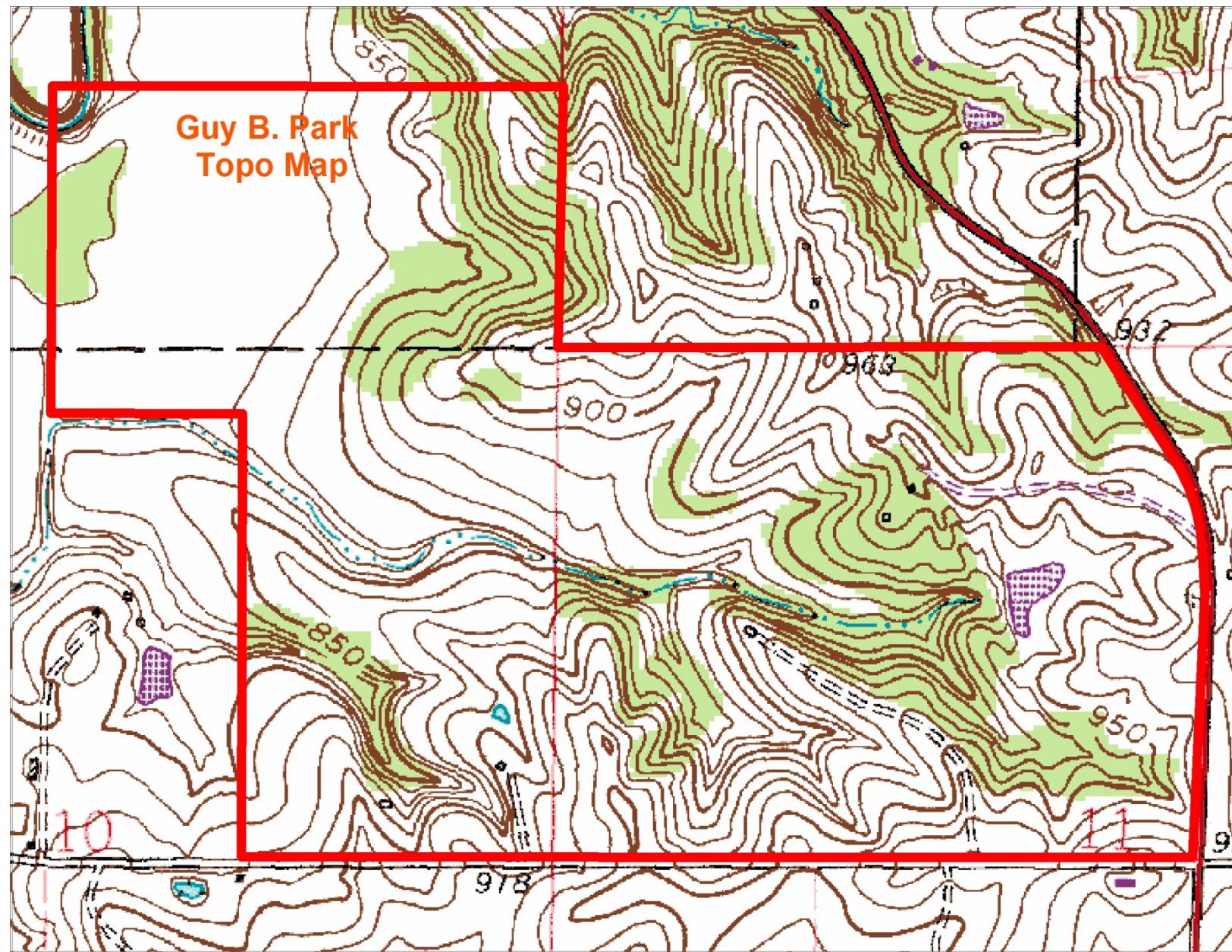
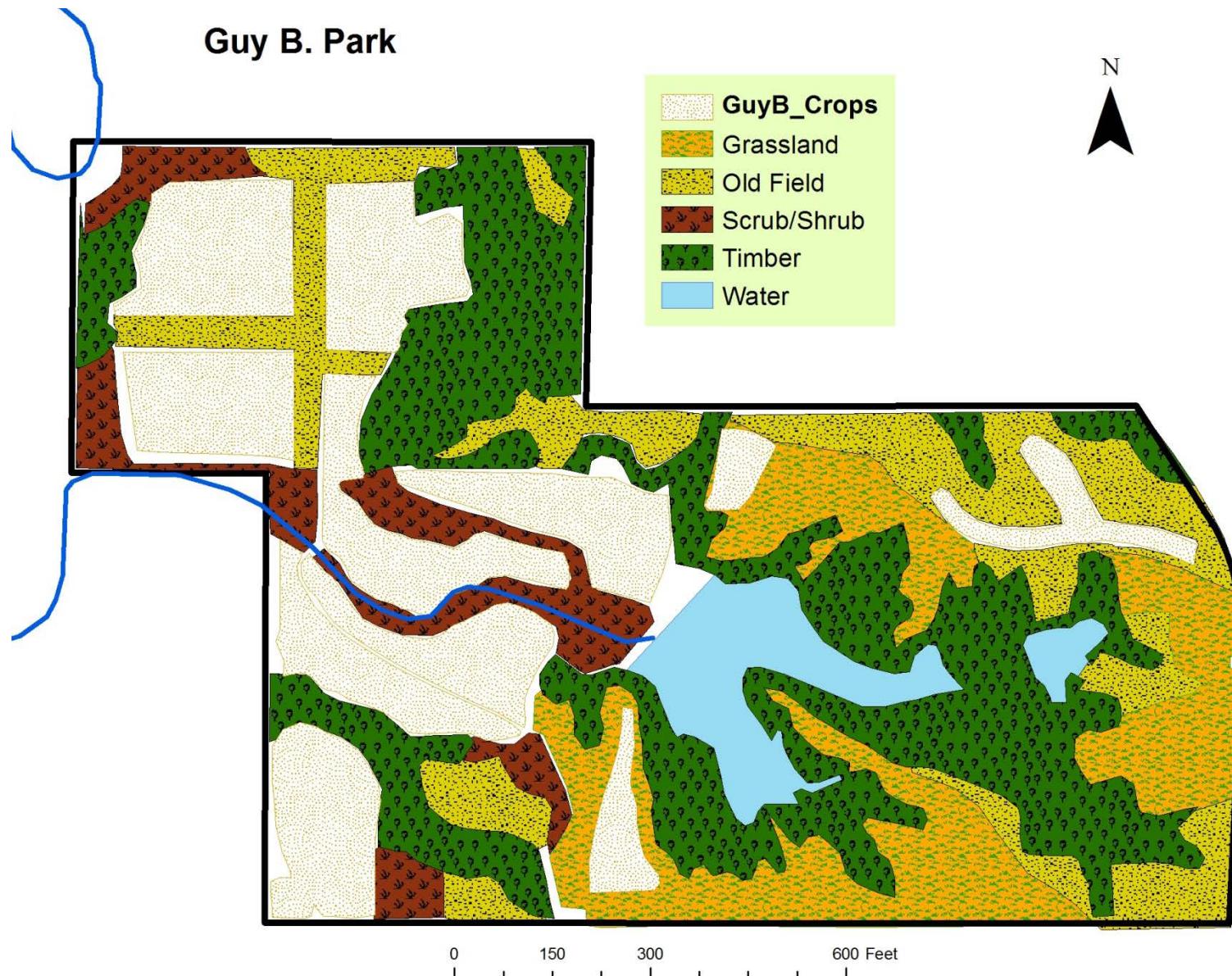


Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map



Appendix A: Guy B. Park Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (May 1-31, 2015):

Provide some mowing of fields so lake can be more accessible in other areas around it. So it gets more use them just the dock and ramp areas. Keep up the fish management. Seems fishing is getting poorer there.

As a 70 year old with certain disabilities, I enjoy the fishing experience at the area, close to home, park within a few feet of the water, ideal. It would relieve the pressure of too many folks in such a small area if there was a road and parking in additional areas such as at the dam. Unable to walk far, I have not use the pond, another area that people could use. I appreciate the fact that the lake (and entire area) is well patrolled by conservation and the County Sheriffs officers.

It would be great if there were a couple of trash cans available so perhaps there will be less trash left on the ground and in the lake. Maybe a fishing club could take on the task of emptying the cans. Also, if there was a paved path around the inside part of the lake shore would allow more of us handicapped anglers access to the lake. I would like to fish from the dam but it is too far for me to walk. [Mobility problems] I have met some really nice people at Tobacco Hill Lake. Great sunsets.

parking at the boat ramp needs to be improved to provide parking for trucks with boat trailers